



# Disaster News

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## **FEMA EXPANDS PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO MUNICIPALITIES AND COUNTIES**

**MONTGOMERY, AI**—Thirty Alabama counties, among 45 that were declared a major disaster area following Hurricane Dennis, have been found eligible for additional financial assistance in repairing and restoring storm-damaged infrastructure.

At the request of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has expanded its public assistance program to make six new categories of aid available.

The 30 counties named for expanded public assistance can now seek aid restoring publicly owned roads and bridges, water control facilities, utilities, parks and recreational facilities, buildings and equipment.

They include Autauga, Baldwin, Butler, Chambers, Choctaw, Clarke, Clay, Coffee, Conecuh, Covington, Crenshaw, Dallas, Escambia, Geneva, Greene, Hale, Henry, Houston, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Mobile, Monroe, Perry, Pike, Randolph, Sumter, Tuscaloosa, Washington, and Wilcox. The deadline for making application for the new added categories is August 9, 2005.

In addition, Cleburne County was declared eligible for all categories of public assistance after continuing assessments of hurricane damage which resulted in the expanded declaration, bringing the total of disaster counties to 46. The deadline for making application for Cleburne County is September 6, 2005.

FEMA pays 75 percent of Public Assistance project costs, local jurisdictions pay 15 percent and the state pays 10 percent.

On July 10, President Bush issued a disaster declaration making 45 counties eligible for reimbursement of costs for debris removal and extraordinary spending on overtime for public employees called out in the emergency.

Three counties, Mobile, Baldwin and Escambia, also were declared eligible for assistance to individuals and families.

FEMA prepares the nation for all hazards and manages federal response and recovery efforts following an incident of national significance. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, trains first responders, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.

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